Gods Sovereignty
AND
Mans Duty
ASSERTED.

Gods Sovereignty in Six Propositions.

1. *He can take away,*
2. *What He will,*
3. *From whom He will,*
4. *How He will,*
5. *When He will,*
6. *Where He will.*

Mans Duty in seven particulars.

1. *Of Humble Acknowledgment.*
2. *Of Godly Fear.*
3. *Of Constant Dependance.*
4. *Of Sensible Affectation.*
5. *Of Patient Submission.*
6. *Of Serious Consideration.*
7. *Of Actual Preparation.*

Occasioned by the Death and Burial of the Eminently Religious and truly Pious Gentlewoman *Mrs Martha Shelton*, Relict of the Right Worshipful *Maurice Shelton*, of *Barningham* in *Suffolk* Esquire, Deceased.

By *R. K.* M. A. and Rector of *Royden* in *Suffolk.*

Licensed according to Order.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Vertuous, and very Hopeful Young Gentlewoman, Mrs. *Martha Shelton*, only Daughter of the Right Worſhipful *Maurice Shelton* of *Barningham* in *Suffolk*, Eſq; Deceaſed, and of his Religious and Loving Conſort Mrs. *Martha Shelton*, now alſo Deceaſed. Grace, Goodneſs, and all ſorts of Felicity in this World, and the other, be Multiplyed and Perfected.

Dear Madam,

WHen the ſorrowful News of the Death of your Dear Mother firſt arrived in theſe parts, it was ſo ſudden, and ſurprizing, and ſome of us had ſo lately received Letters from her, written with her own Hand, that ſhe was in Health, that we were in hopes it was but a flying Report, made by a Stranger in his paſſage through our Town, who reported he had heard ſo. But upon enquiry the news was confirmed by Letters, and then our Hopes were ſwallowed up with Grief and Sorrow, at the conſideration of ſo great a Loſs; and a general Lamentation accompanied the ſad tydings to as many as knew her.

And if her Loſs did ſo ſenſibly touch all that did but know, or hear of her at a diſtance, how much more muſt thoſe be affected with ſorrow and grief, who had the Honour of her Acquaintance, and particular knowledge of her Deſerts, and daily experience of her Kindneſſes? If Servants lament, becauſe they have loſt ſo Loving, ſo Provident, and ſo Indulgent a Miſtreſs: If the Tenants mourn, becauſe they have loſt ſo Kind, and Merciful a Landlady: If the Poor mourn, by reaſon they have loſt ſo Bountiful and Liberal a Benefactor: If the Miniſters of Gods Word lament becauſe they have loſt ſo ſincere hearted, and ſo clean handed a Patroneſs; much more (Dear Madam) muſt her Death affect you, who have loſt as Loving, as Careful, and as Tender a Mother as ever lived on Earth. Your Mother was the only Comfort you had in this World, and her Preſence was more valuable to you then all things in the World, and you loſt her at ſuch a time as you were loath to have parted with her; and therefore your Eyes cannot be without Tears, nor your Boſom without Sighs, nor your Soul without Sorrow, nor your Tongue without Lamentation. Nor do I diſſwade you from being ſenſible of your loſs, and from mourning moderately, upon ſo juſt and neceſſary an Occaſion; for when the Object of our Paſſions are not miſtaken,

nor we exceed in the due meaſure of them, but when we time them aright, and do find our Grief and Lamentation to be helps, not hinderers, of our Devotion, or in a word, when we mourn not as Perſons without Hope, but call in Reaſon and Religion to accompany our Natural Paſſions, then is our Grief and Lamentation a Teſtimony of our Love to the Memory of our Deceaſed Friends, and is warranted both by Reaſon, Scripture, and the Examples of the Saints in all Ages.

But on the contrary, when Perſons mourn immoderately, and ſuffer Nature to work alone, without Faith to guide it; and like Rachel, *are in ſuch extremity of Sorrow, that ſhe refuſed to be Comforted, becauſe her Children were not: And in this alſo King* David *was to blame, to be ſo tranſported with the violence of Paſſion, as to fill the Air with ſuch bitter Cryes and Lamentations for* Abſalom, 2 *Sam.* 18. 33. O my ſon Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon Abſalom: would God I had dyed for thee, O Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon. *As if nothing on this ſide Death could give them ſatisfaction, nor no remedy on this ſide being coffin'd up in the Grave, could yield them any conſolation: By ſuch exceſſive ſorrow we may provoke God, and hurt our ſelves, but can do our Deceaſed Friends no good, nor reſtore them to Life again. When Chriſt ſaw the Widow mentioned in the Goſpel, lamenting the loſs of her only Son, he ſaid unto her,* Weep not, *Luk.* 7. 13. *He did not ſimply and abſolutely forbid all Tears, but ſuch as were immoderate and exceſſive, and in all probability ſuch were hers. Even the beſt are apt to err this way, and in ſuch caſes a Curb is more needful than a Spur. Theſe things I mention to you, knowing that you are of a very kind Nature, and loving Diſpoſition, and fearing theſe may prompt you, upon this occaſion, to exceſs of Grief and Sorrow, which in ſome caſes is more dangerous than a defect; for as it was a ſign between* Jonathan *and* David, *that if his Arrows fell ſhort, there was no danger; ſo it is with our Affections, (as to Worldly loſſes) there is no ſuch danger in their falling ſhort, as in their exceſs. When therefore grief has got you alone, and begins to repreſent your loſs in the blackeſt and moſt diſmal circumſtances; be pleaſed at the ſame time to conſider.*

1. *That God lent you what you have loſt, He gave you Parents before He took them away from you, and that it is a Mercy to you, that you had the benefit of their Heavenly Inſtructions, and Pious Examples ſo long.*

2. *That your Dear Relations are gainers by the exchange, they lived to Chriſt, and St.* Paul *tells us, that Death is gain to ſuch,* Phil. 1. 21. For to me to live is Chriſt, and to dye is gain. *This World is too narrow to find ſuch a Place, ſuch Society, and ſuch Accommodations as they have gained. They are taken away, but it is from Earth to Heaven, from Grace to Glory, from that part of the Church which is Militant here on Earth, to that part of it which is Triumphant in Heaven, they are arrived to a Place of ſuch Plenty, Peace, Pleaſure, Purity and Perfection, as admits of no Want, Diſcord, Grief, Sorrow, Sin, or ſinful Inclinations. They are among ſuch Society, as admits of*

no

no Vice, nor Imperfection, and they have such Accommodations as can neither be conceived with the Mind, nor expressed with the Mouth, 1 Cor. 2. 9. For as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

3. *And if at the same time you consider what is left you, as well as what you have lost, you will see abundant cause to awaken your Soul, and all that is within you, to bless God for what he hath left you, and is pleased to continue to you. God hath given you such Natural Endowments, that you need not the Collusions of Paint to grace your Person, or to get the reputation of a Beauty, or to be voted a Wit of the Times. You have many Powerful, Prudent, and Pious Relations, all ready to consult and endeavour your Welfare upon occasion, and God hath given you such a share and portion in the Riches of this World, as you have but few to equal you. Besides God hath so Spiritualiz'd and Sublimated these Natural and Civil Endowments, by His Grace and Divine Gifts, as renders you not only Amiable, but Desireable to all. What remains then, seeing your Deerest Relations are gone before you, but that you make all the possible speed you can to follow them; Death is a Law that admits of neither Dispensation nor Priviledge; let us be born under the splendor of Palaces, or in the obscurity of Cottages, on Cloath of Gold, or on a Dunghil, among Arras Tapestries or Cobwebs, nothing can exempt us; but what difference soever there be in our condition of Living, we are all equal in the necessity of Dying, and therefore though you are young yet prepare for Death, because it observes not the Laws of Nature, but the appointment of God: Improve your precious Time in waiting for your change, and watching for the coming of your Lord, in acquainting your self more and more with God and Goodness, and in working out your Salvation, and giving all diligence to make your Calling and Election sure. I question not but that your Pious Mother (who loved Gods Image in you more then her own) did before her retreat out of this World, instruct you what is the Rule, the Foundation, the Principle, the Practice, and the End of the Christian Religion; though she be dead, yet let her Instructions live in your Memory, and be made visible in your Life and Conversation.* Solomon *gives pertinent advice to young ones, that they should remember their Creator in the days of their Youth, or (as the* Hebrew *reads it) in their choosing days, the remembrance of your Creator will put you in mind of your Redeemer, and consequently of the miserable state of all Mankind by Nature, and what they must do to get out of that state. If then you remember your Creator so as to know and serve Him, and your Redeemer so, as to take His easie yoke, and light burden upon you; if you acquaint your self with the nature of those Graces, by which you come to be implanted into your Redeemer, and also with the nature of those Ordinances, and means of Grace, which God hath appointed, (and as to the matter and outward manner) hath given you Power to use, to beget, increase, and perfect*

fect Holy Habits in your Heart, and theſe are Reading and Hearing his Word, Sanctifying his Sabbath, by keeping the Reſt of the day, and Sanctifying that Reſt by Publick and Private Worſhip, and Celebrating his Sacraments, in the One of which you enter into Covenant with Him, and in the Other you renew it, theſe are the means to get Grace, which is the Harbenger of Glory.

And to conclude of you, acquaint your ſelf with the end of all Ordinances, Graces, Duties and Profeſſions, which is expreſt by St. Paul, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. Whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatſoever you do, do all to the Glory of God : *The Glory of God is and ought to be the great end of all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, all Natural, all Civil, all Recreative, and all Religious Actions, ought to be directed to this end; as God is moſt Glorious in Himſelf, and moſt worthy to receive Glory from all his Creatures, ſo there is nothing more dear and precious to God, than His own Glory, His very Life is bound up in it, and it is ſo eſſential to His Being, that He cannot be God without it,* Iſa. 42. 8. I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, nor my praiſe to graven images : *He gives Life and Breath, and all things to us, from Him comes every good and perfect gift, that we have or can hope for, He follows us with Mercies from the Womb to the Tomb, and from the Cradle to the Grave, but His Glory, or the Glory due to Him, He will not give to any thing or perſon whatſoever. If then you do fix upon this end, and chooſe ſuch means and ways as are proper to accompliſh it, and do actually endeavour to practice what may conduce to it; as to do juſtly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God, to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World; to hear Gods Word with your Ears, to believe it with your Heart, and to practice it in your Life, you will not only live a happy Life, but dye a bleſſed Death, find a quiet Grave, and a glorious Reſurrection to Eternal Life : And nothing ſhort of this is any thing worth in the Chriſtian Religion, or in point of Salvation, Knowledge without practice is but in effect ignorance, Wiſdom is but folly, Faith is but fancy, Love is but a complement, Hope is but preſumption, Repentance is but a deluſion, and the whole of Profeſſion without Practice, will end in diſappointment and deſperation.*

If what is here or in the following Sermon written, may conduce to your Conſolation, and the Salvation of any Soul, God will have his Glory, and I ſhall have my Deſign; God knows how loath I was to employ my Pen upon this occaſion, eſpecially being under ſuch indiſpoſition of Body, that I am for the moſt part confined to my Bed, yet I thought your Condition required it, and your Quality invited to endeavour it, beſides the many Obligations laid upon me by your Dear Father and Mother Deceaſed, who while they lived, even to the laſt gaſp made me the object of their peculiar reſpects; alſo my own inclinations did ſo conſtrain and preſs me to it, that I could no more abſtain from Writing, then I can from Subſcribing my ſelf, your moſt Obliged and Humble Servant to my Power,

Royden *in* Suff. May 30. 1688. R. K.

[redacted]

Ezekiel xxiv. 16.

Son of man, Behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. &c.

THE Doctrine of Mans Mortality is so very certain, both from Scripture, Reason, and common Experience, that amongst the many wild and wanton Opinions which have been forged, and sent abroad in these last and worst of Times, we do not yet hear of any that have set up for a freedom from Corporal Death, and the Laws of Mortality. Some have been so presumptuous as to declare openly, both by Tongue and Pen, that they have been freed from Sin, and from all Gospel Ordinances, and stated Worship, and from Obedience to the Higher Powers in Church and State, and in truth from all things and persons, that confronted their proud, sensual and worldly Lusts; yet neither the drolling Atheist, nor the deluded Enthusiast, nor the voluptuous Epicure, nor the covetous Worldling, nor the dissembling Hypocrite, nor the superstitious Idolater, nor the conceited Separatist, nor the turbulent Heretick, nor the dividing Schismatick, nor any sort of Men, though never so flagitiously wicked, in Principles and Practices, but they all submit to this as an Article of their Creed, that all must dye.

But though this general truth be consented to by all, yet there are but few that so lay it to heart or consider it as to make due preparations for it, before it come. The generality look on it as a common thing for persons to dye and be buried, and as soon as the Ceremony of Burial is over, their thoughts of, and preparations for Death are over also.

To antidote persons against such inadvertencies, *Solomon* draws up a very good conclusion, *Eccles.* 7. 2. *It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting:* And he gives a double reason, the first is, because this is the end of all men, meaning that all must dye, and come to this conclusion; the other is, that the living will lay it to his heart; by which words

words he intimates to us the ſtupidity of many men, who ſeldom lay Death to heart till they come to the houſe of mourning for the dead; and he alſo ſpeaks probably, that if at any time perſons will conſider where they began and muſt end, it will be when they ſee ſpectacles of Death before them, and the dark Chambers of the Grave opened, and their fellow Creatures, Friends and Relations laid down in Beds of Duſt.

And ſuch a ſpectacle of Mortality is now before us, wherein God hath not only ſpoken this by His Word, but hath fulfilled it by His Providential Works, that ſo the ſolemn Meditation of the one, and the ſerious Conſideration of the other, might quicken us, not only to hear, but to hearken to ſuch Duties as the Text ſhall point out, both for the inſtruction of ſuch as are ignorant, the comfort of ſuch as mourn, and the edification of all.

Son of man, Behold I take away from thee the deſire of thine eyes with a ſtroke, &c.

The words in general are a narration what God would do in *Ezekiels* Family, and alſo how the Man of God was to behave himſelf under ſo great a loſs. And albeit there is a Typical and Prophetical Sence in them, holding forth the deſtruction of the Famous City and Temple of *Jeruſalem*, under the Type of the ſudden Death of *Ezekiels* Wife, and alſo of the miſerable ſtate and condition of the *Jews*, by the carriage enjoyned the Prophet under ſo hard lots; yet there is a plain and literal ſence in them, ſuitable enough to an occaſion of this nature, the particulars of which are as follow.

1. An humbling appellation given to the Prophet as Introductory, *Son of man*, or as the *Heb.* reads it בן־אדם Son of *Adam*; *Adam* was the name of the firſt man, and the Holy Ghoſt makes uſe of it to be the appellative name of all his Poſterity, to mind all Men of their Foundation and Concluſion, that Duſt they are, and to Duſt they muſt return, and to Antidote them againſt Pride, and Avarice, and to diſpoſe them to a ſpeedy, entire, and conſtant ſubmiſſion to their Makers Will.

2. An Almighty Agent, I, meaning *Jehovah* who am from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, and in all Divine Perfections Infinite, and abſolutely perfect.

3. A powerful Act, Take away: I Take away, or Remove, as the word לקח ſignifies, and both theſe are a periphraſis of Death, which is a taking away, or removing of perſons from one place, ſtate and condition to another.

4. The ſpecial Object of this potent, agent, and powerful Act, the deſire of thine Eyes; the *Septuagint* reads it plurally, ἐπιθυμήματα τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν σου the deſires of thine Eyes, he means his Wife, who by reaſon of her

Loving

Loving Diſpoſition, Vertuous Qualities, and Chaſt Converſation, was very dear and deſireable to him.

5. The manner how God would take her away, expreſt in this word, במגפה *in percuſſione*, with a ſtroke, or ſmiting: Here is no mention made with what Diſeaſe God ſmote her, but this is certain, that the ſtroke ſoon diſpatched her, ſhe living but a few hours after it was given.

6. Here is the Aſpect, or note of attention, in this word הנה *Behold*, which is like the hand in the Margent of a Book, pointing out ſomething to be well conſidered, and duly obſerved.

The whole of all theſe may be reduced to two general heads.

1. *Gods Abſolute Sovereignty.*
2. *Mans Duty.*

Gods Abſolute Sovereignty is held forth, firſt more generally, and then more particularly.

(1.) More generally, under two Heads. 1. He doth what He will, and 2. He Commands what He will to be done. The Lord firſt tells the Prophet what He would do, that He would take away, remove, or bereave him of the deſire of his Eyes; and after that He enjoyns him more than an ordinary Obedience, both Active and Paſſive, he muſt not mourn, nor weep, nor uſe thoſe Funeral Rites, which were both Lawful and Laudable among the *Jews*. There is no queſtion, but the Heart of the Prophet was much affected, and wounded with ſo great a loſs; without doubt he was ready enough to have expreſt his inward grief, by mourning, weeping, and other ſorrowful expreſſions, and not to mourn, nor weep, nor ſhew any ſentiments of ſorrow for the loſs of ſo near and dear a Relation, might ſeem not only Irreligious, but Unnatural; yet he muſt not do it, he had a poſitive, and a particular Command given him to the contrary, and a Reaſon annexed why he was to Obey; which was that he was to be a ſign or an example to the *Jews*, their deareſt Comforts, the deſire of their Eyes, and the joy of their Hearts ſhould be taken away, and they ſhould be forced to do as he did.

So then though this is a very rare preſident, and not to be reduced into practice, or made a general Rule, but perſons may mourn and weep, and expreſs their inward grief for the loſs of their Relations, by ſorrowful Habits, Geſtures, and other Funeral Rites; yet this at once ſhews us the Abſolute Sovereignty of *Jehovah*, and how ready all pious perſons are to ſubmit to the moſt ſolitary, deſpiſed, and loſing Services He ſhall pleaſe to enjoyn them.

Concerning the more particular Conſideration of the Abſolute Sovereignty, and Peerleſs Preheminency of *Jehovah*, I deſign not to inſiſt largely upon it, by way of common place, but to make uſe only of what I find in the

Text, and may be pertinent to the occasion for which it was chosen, and this I shall do (for the gratifying of weak Memories) in these Propositions or Conclusions following.

1. *Proposition.* That God can take away. *Son of man, Behold I take away*: I can do it of my self, and I can do it without the leave or help of any other. Taking away in this sence is an Act of the Highest Power, and most proper to *Jehovah.* as being Primitively and Fundamentally in Him, *Psal.* 62. 11. *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard it, that power belongeth unto God*: The *Hebrew* reads it, Power to *Elohim*, to note to us that God is not only Powerful, but Power it self; and therefore in the Holy Language, nothing is put between them: Hence He is called, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. μόνος δυνάστης the only Potentate; for though there be many Potentates in the World, yet the Power and Potency of *Jehovah* is so Primitive, so Radical, so Fundamental, and so Incomparable, that all Power is as nothing in comparison of His, yea, if we trace all Power to the Fountain, it Centers in Him, and He is the only Potentate. And though there is a sence in which not only Men but Satan is said to have Power to take away; yet this is certain that the power by which they have or can take away, must some way or other come from *Jehovah*, and therefore what Christ said to *Pilate* when he boasted of the Power he had to Crucifie, or to release him may be said to all that are in Power in Church or State, *John* 19. 11. *Jesus answered, thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above*: He doth not deny but that *Pilate* had Power to take away His Life, but He minds him from whence that Power came, and that it was but a derivative, permissive, and subordinate Power, which was given him from God above, and therefore he ought to improve it for, and not against God above, and that he must be accountable one time or other to God above, how he had improved his Power.

God assumes this Act of taking away to Himself, not only in this Text, but in many other places of Scripture, and we find his own people also putting this act upon Him; *Job* 9. 12. *Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him?* It's certain that not only Satan, but many other, both things and persons were employed in taking away from *Job*, yet he passes by all Instruments, and puts this Act upon God, and saith, *Behold he taketh away*, and then asserts His absolute Prerogative by making a challenge to all Creatures, be they never so many to unite, or potent to resist, or politick to perswade, who will say unto Him, what dost thou? Gods Power is such that no man ought to lift up a thought, or speak a word, much less lift up a hand or foot against Him; and if they should he hath both might and right to vindicate Himself against all opposers: So then we lay this as the Basis of all the other

Pro-

Propoſitions, that God can take away, without the leave or help of any Creature in Heaven or Earth, yea, though all perſons, and all powers, inſtruments, and ſecond cauſes ſhould ſtand neuter. Nay, though they ſhould all prove diſloyal, and combine againſt Him, yet He can carry on His work, but neither Men, nor Devils, nor any Creature, can take away without leave and permiſſion from Him.

2. *Propoſition*; That God can take away what He will: *Son of man, behold I take away the deſire of thine eyes*; thy Wife, thy boſom Friend, thy Companion in all conditions, that which is the neareſt and deareſt Comfort thou haſt in this World, that which thou ſo much delights to ſee, to hear, and to converſe with, that which thou valueſt above all Worldly Comforts, and that which will grieve thee above all things to part with, though ſhe be the deſire of thine eyes, and her preſence and continuance with thee would be the joy of thy heart, yet its my will to take her away from thee. *Job* 23. 13. it's ſaid, *That what his Soul deſireth even that he doth*: Here is abſolute Sovereignty proper to *Jehovah* alone, and competible to none elſe; *Pſal.* 135. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the ſeas, and all deep places*: This *Nebuchadnezzar*, one of the greateſt Monarchs on Earth in his time, (after he had been turn'd to graſs) did ingenuouſly confeſs, *Dan.* 4. 35. when his underſtanding or reaſon returned to him, *That Gods dominion was an everlaſting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doſt thou?* The meaning of all which places is, that Gods power, and His only is purely Arbitrary, and no limits or circles, or bounds put to it, but His own will.

If Satan and his inſtruments had power to act according to their wills, what miſchief would they not act? Satan is ſaid to walk about as a roaring Lyon, but if he were as potent as willing he would ſoon act the part of a devouring Lyon. *Solomon* tells us, *Eccl.* 9. 18. *One ſinner deſtroys much good*; and if one impenitent ſinner by his counſel, advice, or example, or by his power and authority in Church or State may deſtroy much good, what then will a whole combination of ſuch ſinners do? How ready and willing ſuch are to combine againſt God and Goodneſs, and how hardly they are taken off from carrying on their deſigns, and what difficulties they will encounter before they will deſiſt, both Scripture and Experience do ſufficiently teſtifie; and when *Jehovah* in His wiſe Providence infatuates them, diſappoints them, and takes them in their own craftineſs, that their hands cannot perform their enterprizes, but they are forced to deſiſt for want of

power, yet even then they are willing to carry on their wicked designs if they had but power; and in this the Devil must accept of their will for the deed, and of the affection for action; and its happy for the World that all power but Gods is limited, and that His power only runs parallel with, and hath no other bounds but His own Will and Pleasure.

And this still further proves the absolute Sovereignty of *Jehovah*, in that He can take away what He will, He can if He pleases take away our Personal, our Family, our Congregational, our National Blessings: He can if He pleases take away our Peace, our Plenty, our Health, our Liberties, yea and our Lives: He can if He please make sad rents and breaches in Families, Churches and States: He can pull Flesh from Flesh, one near and dear Relation from another, Husbands from Wives, and Wives from Husbands, Parents from Children, and Children from Parents, Ministers from People, and People from Ministers; and so of all relations of persons God can take them if he pleases one from another, though they be never so near and dear, useful and beneficial one to another; though they be never so unwilling to part one from another, yet He can take away what He pleases, though it displease us never so much.

3. *Proposition*; God can take away what He will from whom He will. *Son of man behold I take from thee.* *Ezekiel* was a famous Prophet, who had visions from God, and now enjoys the vision of God; he was Gods mouth to his people, and his peoples mouth to God; but though he was Gods Herauld, Gods Ambassadour, Gods Friend and Favourite, and his intimate acquaintance; yet *Son of man, behold I take from thee.* We may not think that either riches or poverty, strength or weakness, liberty or bondage, peace or war, youth or age, piety or impiety, can exempt any from the absolute Sovereignty of God; but He can take away not only what He will, but from whom He will; whether it be from single persons, or Families, or whole Nations, the mighty sinners of the Old World who blasphemed God and contemned Religion, were not exempted from Gods Supremacy; for God took them away with a deluge of water. See also what God did to His own people when they apostatized from Him. *Isa.* 3. 1, 2, 3. *For behold, the Lord the Lord of hosts doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staffe; the whole stay of bread and the whole staffe of water: The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the prudent and the ancient, the captains of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellour, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.* These are sad judgments threatned and inflicted, no less then the total subversion of Church and State, and this must be effected by taking away what would make them happy, and by bestowing upon them what would

tend

tend to their ruine, and both these acts are attributed to Gods Supremacy, and both against *Jerusalem* and *Judah*, who were once so dear to Him. For behold the Lord of Hosts doth take away from *Jerusalem* and *Judah*.

Job was a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed (or turn'd from) evil; yet those excellent qualifications did not exempt him from Gods Prerogative, but God took from him all his Worldly enjoyments and Earthly comforts; and if God do thus to His Friends, what may His Foes expect? If the Bodies of Saints which are Temples of the Holy Ghost, be subject to be enflamed with hot burning Feavers, and shaken with cold Agues, to be griped with Gouts, and tortured with the Stone, to be wasted with Consumptions, and their Lives to be taken away by Death; how much more the Bodies of wicked Men, which are Temples where the unholy Ghost dwells: If God lays His Axe to the roots of such Trees as grow in His own Vineyard, which bring forth not only the Buds and Leaves of a formal Profession, but the real and pleasant Fruits of Holiness and Righteousness; and hews down their Health by Sickness, their Wealth by Poverty, their Peace by War, their Liberties by Bondage, and their Lives by Death; then much more are all such Trees as grow wild, and are barren, or at least fruitful in nothing but vice and wickedness, and do but cumber the Earth where they stand, to be not only hewn down, but cast into the fire that burns with the brimstone of Gods wrath for ever and ever. To conclude, if Judgment begin at the House of God, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel; if God can take away what He will from *Job*, from *Ezekiel*, and from His Faithful ones; let not any Persons of what Sex, Age, Quality, Degree or Calling whatsoever think of an exemption from the same absolute Sovereignty.

4. *Proposition*; God can take away what He will from whom He will; how or in what manner He pleases: *Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.* He doth not only tell the Prophet what He would take from him, but how He would do it, and that was with a stroke or smiting; there is no mention made with what Malady the Lord smote her, but its evident she lived but a few hours after it was given; both the *Syriack* and *Arabick* Version reads it *with a sudden stroke*, to note to us, she dyed suddenly; she was alive in the Morning and dead in the Evening. Gods Prerogative is such that He can take our Comforts from us, or us from our Comforts in what way or manner He pleaseth. God can if He will summon persons to Death by Sickness, and give them warning of the last enemy before it come: He can send the ordinary antecedents of Death, Sicknesses and Diseases, that shall confine them for some time to their Chambers or Beds of Affliction, and so weaken them gradually, till Nature is spent,

ſpent, and the Lamp of Life burnt out and conſumed: He can cauſe the Meſſengers of Death to continue long upon the Body, and as it were beſiege the Soul in the Body, and at laſt ſtarve or tyre it out of its Habitation. And if He pleaſes He can command Breath ſuddenly out of our Noſtrils, and violently blow out the Lamp of Life, and thruſt the Soul out of the Body in a moment, when there is not the leaſt appearance of Death upon us. How ſuddenly were all *Jobs* Children taken away, that he heard they were all dead before he heard any of them were ſick. It is ſaid of the *Sodomites*, that they were haughty, and committed abomination before the Lord, therefore the Lord took them away as he thought good; *Ezek.* 16. 50 they ſinned as they thought good, and God took them away as He thought good; the Lord thought good to take away the ſinners of the Old World by Water, and the filthy *Sodomites* by Fire, and Schiſmatical *Corah* and his followers by opening the Earth to ſwallow them up, and the hard hearted *Egyptians* with all their mighty Army, by drowning them all in the Red Sea; Examples of this nature might be given in great plenty, both in the Holy Scriptures, and Secular Hiſtories, in what divers modes God hath been pleaſed to take away; ſome by Fire, ſome by Water, ſome by Peſtilence, ſome by Famine and ſome by Sword, ſome by caſualties and unexpected accidents, ſome by one means and ſome by another; ſome by a natural, others by a violent death; ſome are taken away ſuddenly, others dye a lingring death; ſometimes He lightens and gives warning before He thunders, and ſometimes He ſhoots ſuch darts as fly ſwiftly, and wound mortally, and all as He pleaſes.

5. *Propoſition*; God can take away what He will, from whom He will, how He will, and when He will. The Prophet *Ezekiel* was in Captivity when the Lord ſaid, *Son of man, behold I take away from thee the deſire of thine eyes with a ſtroke.* I take her away, now at this time, now thou art in Captivity and among thine Enemies; yet now I take away thy beſt Friend, to whom thou mayeſt in ſafety unboſom thy ſelf, and who would be a great comfort to thee in all thoſe ſorrows thou meeteſt with in this time of reſtraint: It had been a great favour if God would have been pleaſed to have ſpared her a while longer, till the time of captivity had been over, or until ſhe her ſelf had been more ripe in nature for that Eternity that Death ſuddenly called her to; but to be taken away at ſuch a time, and in ſo ſhort a time, muſt needs trouble him the more, yet Gods abſolute Sovereignty anſwers all. *Job* 21. 23, 24, 25, 26. *One dyeth in his full ſtrength being wholly at eaſe and quiet: And another dyes in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, and never eateth with pleaſure, they ſhall lye down alike in the duſt, and the worms ſhall cover them.* To teach us that Death ſeizeth equally upon all, and makes all equal;

qual, and that Death doth not observe the Laws of Nature, but the appointment of God, and also to teach us that Lesson that King *David* had learned, *Psal.* 31. 15. *My times are in thy hands:* He means my times of sickness and Health, my times of Plenty or Want, of Liberty or Bondage, of Prosperity or Adversity, my times of Living and Dying are in the hands of *Jehovah*, to dispose of as He pleases, and none knows when he shall be taken from time into Eternity. Sometimes God gathers His Fruit when it is green; sometimes He suffers it to grow till it be ripe; and sometimes He lets it grow till it be as we say, rotten ripe; and its well for persons that their times are not in their own hands, nor in the hands of their friends nor enemies, but in the hands of God, whose Sovereignty justifies Him in all He doth.

6. *Proposition*; God can take away what He will, from whom He will, how and when He will, and also where or in what place He pleases. *Ezekiels* Wife was taken away in *Babylon*; *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* must dye in the Red Sea; *Moses* that Man of God must dye in the Land of *Moab*; though God shewed him the promised Land, and he saw it with his eyes, and was qualified every way to have led the Children of *Israel* into it; for its said that though he was an hundred and twenty years old, yet his Eye was not dim, nor his Natural Force abated; *Deut.* 34. yet he must not go over into it, but dye in the Land of *Moab*. There is a truth in that saying so common among the Vulgar, that persons may tell where they were born, but know not where they shall dye; and not only all History but our own Experience teacheth us, what multitudes have breathed out their Souls in such places as they never expected; some at home, some abroad, some in the City, others in the Country; some in Prisons and Dungeons, others on Gibbets and Scaffolds; whatever persons have, they know not when or where they may lose it; but whensoever or wheresoever it pleases God to take away what we have, His absolute Sovereignty justifies Him in all.

Put all these together and we have a full demonstration of the absolute Sovereignty, the peculiar Authority, and peerless Preheminency of *Jehovah*. 1. He can take away; 2. What He will; 3. From whom He will; 4. How or in what manner He will; 5. When He pleases; 6. And where or in what places He pleases.

We now come to the second part of the Text, *Mans Duty*, in this note of attention which fronts the Text, *Behold*, which is not only an assertion of the truth of what is spoken, but a call to Man, to whom it is spoken, for several Duties, and doth in general teach us this Lesson.

That when it pleaseth God to make use of His absolute Sovereignty in taking away, it is Mans Duty to Behold.

This

This is in truth a prospect to be beheld, not only with an Eye of Sense and Reason, but with an Eye of Faith. In Providential works of this nature, Sence presents matter to Reason, and Reason presents it to Faith, and both ought to joyn in this work; and if persons have either eye-sight or insight for any of the Providential works of God, acted upon the stage of this World, much more should they have for such works, wherein so much of Gods Sovereignty and peculiar Authority doth appear, and wherein persons themselves are so intimately concerned, that it is to be feared, nothing in an ordinary way will soften the hard hearts of persons, if such works do not.

The sum of Mans Duty implyed in this word *Behold*, we shall plainly and fully lay before you in these following particulars.

1. Behold and acknowledge God the principal Author of all those lots or Providential dispensations that befal you, be they never so sad and dismal. Thus God would be beheld in the Text, not only for a giver but for a taker away, when He saith to the Prophet, *Son of man, behold I take away*. And thus we find *Job* under the loss of all he had in this World, acknowledging *Jehovah* both in giving and taking away; *Job* 1. 21. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.* Its certain that both the *Sabeans* and the *Chaldeans*, and the Fire from Heaven, and the Wind from the Wilderness were employed in taking away from *Job*, yet he passes by all those Instruments, and second Causes, to the Chief Agent and first Cause, taking neither good nor evil out of the hands of any Creature, but agnizing and acknowledging the Creator in all. There are some of Gods Dispensations so dark and deep, and come so suddenly and unexpectedly, that some persons are ready to conclude that all falls out by chance, accident, or fortune; but whatever persons may conjecture, this is very certain, that all things fall under Divine appointment. The Prophet puts forth a question and resolves it; *Amos* 3. 6. *Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?* By evil he means not sinful, but pœnal evils; the evils of sin whether in the City or Country, is Mans doing, but the evil of punishment in the City or Country are Gods doing, and they are so upon this ground, because they cannot be done without Him. He hath Men and Devils, and all Creatures, and their operations; yea, and all sicknesses, diseases, and unexpected accidents in His Hands, and they cannot touch us but by permission from Him; His Hand is in all our sorrows, and therefore we ought to acknowledge Him in all. And as Man ought to acknowledge Gods Providence in all he meets with, so at the same time he ought to behold and acknowledge himself to be a poor, weak, vain and inconsiderable Creature; even then when he is in the greatest prosperity, and highest accomplishments

this

this World can afford him; he must not forget the title here given to the Prophet, *Son of man*, or Son of *Adam*, or Earth; he is but a frail Earthen Vessel, but newly come from the Earth, and lives upon it, and must shortly return to it: See what is predicated of Man in his most florid state, *Psalm* 39. 5. *Behold thou hast made my days as an hand breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity, Selah.* He begins this Sermon with a *verily*, and concludes it with a *Selah*; and what is it that must be so paused upon, and carefully taken notice of? It is this, that every Man, let him be who or what he will, at his best state, when he is most lively and lusty, healthy and wealthy, when he hath all those accomplishments that may render him most considerable in this World, when his excellency mounts up to the Heavens, and his head reacheth unto the Clouds, yet then he is not only vain, but vanity it self, and altogether so, both as to his inside and outside; he is then subject and lyable to have all he hath taken away from him, and utterly unable to keep it when God calls for it. *Psalm* 62. 9. *Surely men of high degree are vanity, and men of low degree are a lie: to be laid in the ballance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.* By Men of high degree and Men of low degree are meant all degrees of Men, and by vanity and a lye are meant all kinds of uncertainty; and that persons might not transiently pass by this Doctrine, but dwell upon the consideration of it; he begins with a *surely*, and concludes with a *Selah.* And although vain Man in his prosperity will not consider this, the dust and clatter of Worldly things, fills the heads, hearts and hands of persons so full, that they have not time; yet when it pleases God to exercise His Sovereignty by smiting them with some Mortal Disease, which takes them off Worldly business, and confines them to their Chambers and Beds of pain and sorrow, and signs certain sentiments of Death upon them, then they will all set their Hearts and Tongues to this Truth, that Man at his best state is altogether and all over vanity.

2. Behold, and stand in awe and fear before *Jehovah*, not only the Excellency of His Being, but His Supream Authority; render Him an Object to be feared. We naturally fear all those persons who have power over our Bodies. *Solomon* tells us, *The wrath of a king is as messengers of death*; *Prov.* 16. 14. and one reason is, because a King hath power, and can find many means to execute his wrath; he can easily write his wrath in Characters of Blood upon such as offend him. If our beings or well beings as to this present Life, did depend upon any mortal Man, how careful should we be to please, and how fearful to displease such; how much more should we stand in awe of *Jehovah*, who is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and higher than the highest; by whom Kings Reign, and to whom they must

all give an account at Death and Judgment, from whom every good and every perfect gift comes, in whom we live, move, and have our being; and upon whom we depend for whatever we have or can hope for.

When our Saviour saw His Disciples to be endangered by the slavish fear of Men, He prescribes this fear of God to cure all other fears; *Luke* 12. 4, 5. *And I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you; Fear him.*

The utmost stretch of Mans power, though armed with malice, can but kill the Body, which is but the mortal and meaner part of Man, nay Mans power cannot go so far without permission from God, but the power of God can begin where Mans power ends: He can kill and cast the Soul into Hell, therefore Christ prescribes this, not only as an Antidote against, but the Cure of all other slavish, sinful and diabolical fear whatsoever.

That is pertinent Advice given by the most Evangelical Prophet, *Isa.* 8. 13. *Sanctifie the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* Such a fear ought to be joyned with this note of attention in the Text; and it is nothing else but such an awful reverential regard to the Divine Majesty in all His Discoveries and Providential Dispensations, as powerfully stirs up persons to do what they can to please Him, and to shun and avoid whatsoever they think will displease Him.

This Holy, this Religious Fear of the Lord is a Gospel Duty; yea it is the sum of the everlasting Gospel; it's the great Principle of Religion, which purifies and enlarges the heart; it brings persons to God and keeps them with Him, it makes persons very careful to put sin out of their hearts, lips and lives, and to keep it out that it return not; it also makes persons watchful to take all opportunities of doing and receiving good, it's not only a Grace, but comprehends all Graces; *Psal.* 14. 26. *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence.* Confidence is the highest Act of Faith that mortal Man can attain to in this World; it's that Act of Faith whereby the Soul receives Christ upon His terms and condirions; and relies upon Christ according to His Promise, and is perswaded, yea fully perswaded that He will be as good as His word. This fear dares encounter difficulties, and is victorious against all opposites: See one Example of the activity and strength of this fear in *Noah*, when the Lord forewarned him of the destruction of the Old World, and bade him make an Ark of *Gopher* Wood for his safety, *Gen.* 6. 13. *And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; the earth is filled with violence: and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.* *Noah* did behold what God said by an Eye of Faith, and that Faith begat

Holy

Holy Fear, and that Fear moved his Faith, and both acted their parts in his preservation; *Heb.* 11. 6. *By faith Noah being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear prepared an ark to the saving of his house*, &c.

Noah by an Eye of Sence saw a deluge of sin in the Old World, and by an Eye of Faith he saw a deluge of water coming to destroy them; and his Fear made him to shun the sin, and to provide for the danger; we cannot but think there were very many impediments and hinderances in the way both of his Faith and Fear. As,

(1.) The work was great, and very expensive, enough to discourage both the actings of his Faith and his Fear.

(2.) The time when he was to begin to build the Ark, it was one hundred and twenty years before, yet his Faith believed it, and his Fear moved him to begin without delay.

(3.) All the rest of the World were of a contrary mind, he must be solitary in this work without any to joyn with him.

(4.) He was to believe that God would drown all the World, except him and his Family.

(5.) We may conjecture he met with many a scoff and flout from the Men of the Old World; with what scorn would they look upon such a Faith and such a Fear? How would they question what he meant, what madness had intoxicated his Brain, to think there should fall waters from the Skies to drown all the World? And if there did not, how could he sail that prodigious Vessel on dry Land? *Noah* was not taken off by any thing they said or did; his Faith assured him what God had said would come to pass, and his Fear moved him to lay in provision for his own security.

3. Behold and constantly depend upon God, not only for what you want, but for the continuance of what you have. Persons that are high and cloathed with power, do not only love, but look to be trusted to and leaned upon, and the higher they are the more they would be trusted. Even the Bramble, a base and fruitless shrub, when the Trees had chosen it to reign, could presently say, if in truth you anoint me King over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow, *Judg.* 9. 14, 15. Soveraignty, though in a shrub, would have all to rely wholly upon it for shelter and safety; much more should *Jehovah* be trusted and depended upon, who is God over all, blessed for ever. *Isa.* 26. 4. *Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* Something or other persons will have to trust to, if they trust not in the Creator they will trust in some Creature, or other, in Corporal Strength, Riches, or in the Arm of Flesh, or in Man whose Breath is in his Nostrils; but saith the Prophet, *Trust in the Lord for ever*, upon this ground, *for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* He

is ſtrong in Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs and Truth, and Everlaſtingly ſo; *Pſal.* 62. 8. The like advice is given, *Truſt in the Lord at all times, ye people*; and he gives this reaſon in the 11th *verſe*, *That power belongs unto God.* Abſolute Sovereignty, Supream Power and Peerleſs Authority, renders God an Object to be truſted to by all people, at all times, in all places, ſtates and conditions. Hath God given you natural, artificial, civil, or ſpiritual good things? Have you Wiſdom to contrive, Power to act, and Riches and Relations to ſecond you in all you do? Bleſs God for all, but do not truſt in any thing or perſon whatſoever, Supream Power may ſoon blaſt all, *Eccl.* 9. 11. *I returned and ſaw under the ſun, that the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, neither yet bread to the wiſe, nor yet riches to men of underſtanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance* (or miſchance) *happeneth to them all.* Who better accompliſhed to win a race than a ſwift man? Or to win a battle than a ſtrong man? Who more like to get bread than a wiſe man, or favour than a man of skill? Who would not lay ten to one on the ſide of perſons thus accompliſhed? And more inſtances might be added: Who more likely to live than perſons who are young, ſtrong and healthful, or to perſwade than the Eloquent Orator, or to conquer in a Diſpute than the Learned Logician, yet miſchances, unexpected accidents and ſad diſappointments, may befal all ſorts of perſons and their actions, though they be never ſo well qualified to accompliſh lawful enterprizes; and the reaſon given is, *that time and chance* (or rather miſchance) *happens to them all.* The ſwift man may meet with a fall, the ſtrong with a wound, or ſomething to weaken him, and ſo of all the reſt; the Providence of God ſuperſedes all perſons and all operations; and abſolute Sovereignty can take away what He pleaſes, from whom He pleaſes, how, where, and when He pleaſes.

4. Behold, and be deeply ſenſible of, and Religiouſly affected with grief and ſorrow for your loſs: If the Prophet had not been expreſly forbidden to mourn, weep, and ſhed tears, there is no queſtion but he would have expreſſed his inward ſorrow by outward lamentation; nay it had been both unnatural and contrary to the practice of the *Jews*, to have omitted viſible expreſſions of his affections for the loſs of ſo near a Relation. What he did in this caſe he had a particular command for from Gods own mouth; and without ſuch a particular command we have no warrant to follow his example; but when God takes away our Relations, or fellow Chriſtians, or any things or perſons that are dear and uſeful to us, we ought to be ſenſible of, and deeply affected with our loſs: *Abraham* mourned and wept for his beloved VVife *Sarah*, *Gen.* 23. 2. The *Egyptians* mourned ſeventy dayes for *Jacob*, and his Children lamented him ſeven dayes more, *Gen.* 50. 3, 10.

David

David mourned for *Saul*, and his good Friend *Jonathan*, all *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, yea and *Jeremiah* the Prophet, mourned and lamented the loſs of *Joſiah*, 2 *Chron.* 35. 24, 25. Devout men made great lamentation for *Stephen*, *Acts* 8. 2. And we read of weeping for *Dorcas*, *Acts* 9. 30. It were eaſie to give many inſtances, how both the light of Nature, and the examples of Saints in all Ages do commend this Duty to us; and it was an argument of Gods anger againſt *Jehoiakim*, that no man ſhould lament his death, ſaying, *Ah my brother, or ah ſiſter, ah lord, or ah his glory, Jer.* 22. 18.

And we find the want of this laid as a great crime to the *Jews* of old; *Iſa.* 57. 1. *The righteous periſheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.* The Prophet in this Text laments both the loſs of good men, and the ſtupidity of thoſe that ſurvived. There were ſome in his time among the *Jews* that were Righteous, both by Converſion and by Converſation, and theſe were alſo merciful men, or men of mercy; theſe were taken away by Death, and ſurely this was a very great loſs, for theſe are a common good, a general bleſſing, and under God the ſtrength, the pillars, and the ſafety of the places where they live; when we loſe theſe we loſe the benefit of their good advice and counſel, and of their juſt and ſeaſonable reproof when we do ill, and of their commendations when we do well; we alſo loſe the benefit of their prayers; theſe are the VVorlds advocates, both to prevent Judgments and procure Mercies; when ſin hath made breaches theſe ſtand in the gap to prevent deſolation; we loſe the benefit of their good works, and of their pious examples.

One would have thought that as ſoon as the news of theſe Mens deaths had touched their Ears, that they would have been wounded at the heart with ſorrow, and if they had no regard either to Righteouſneſs, or Righteous Men, yet when Merciful Men, who had fed and cloathed them, were taken away, one would have thought they would have been concerned, and mourners would have gone about the ſtreets, and tears would have poured out from all eyes, but ſuch a general ſtupidity was among them, that as the Prophet ſaith, *No man layeth it to heart*; they cared not for them while they lived, nor feared the evils to come when they were dead; they neither conſidered the ſignal Providence of God, in taking others away by Death, nor how ſoon they themſelves might be taken away. Nay, perhaps ſuch was their hardneſs of heart, that they rejoyced at their Deaths, and were more glad of their room than of their company, and perhaps might conclude the times would be better when ſuch were taken away

We live in an hard hearted Age, and many behave themſelves under ſuch awakening diſpenſations, as if they had received an expreſs command from God

God (as the Prophet in the Text did) to exempt them from all mourning, weeping and ſorrow, or any expreſſion of Religious Lamentation. They are like the *Stoicks*, who becauſe they could not maſter their affections, baniſht them altogether; they think it needleſs, or a thing below them; but let ſuch know that Religion doth not aboliſh, but moderate Natural Paſſions, and to be without them is worſe than to fail in the uſe of them. To ſorrow immoderately may ſometimes make perſons like a beaſt, but to be without ſorrow makes men like ſo many ſtones; let ſuch know alſo, that they neglect a Duty that the beſt both of the Heathen and Chriſtian World have ever practiſed, and which beſpeaks them void not only of all ſaving Grace, but of a good Nature; and when ſuch ſignal diſpenſations of God have no influence upon them, it is to be feared that nothing in an ordinary way will affect them. And as it is a hainous crime to be obſtinate under ſuch affecting works of God, ſo it's commonly ſeen, that ſuch perſons are ready to erect Tribunals, and paſs very uncharitable ſentence againſt ſuch as God afflicts, or takes away ſuddenly, or before they are ripe in Nature, and to conclude themſelves to be Gods Favourites upon no other ground but becauſe they are permitted to proſper in Worldly things, and to live to old Age; that is pertinent advice, *Heb.* 13. 3. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them that ſuffer adverſity, as being your ſelves alſo in the body.* Whatever hath befallen any man in the body, may befal another while in the body, as all men have but one common Nature, ſo there is but one event unto all; therefore let us labour to get our hearts affected, and lay to heart the death of others, and provided we mourn not as perſons without hope, nor ſuffer our ſorrow to overflow the banks of moderation, but let Reaſon and Religion begin, ſeaſon, and terminate our ſorrow; ſuch mourning is good, comely, laudable and pleaſing to God and all good Men.

5. Behold, and patiently ſubmit to what God doth, as the Will of God revealed in His Word, ought to be the Rule of all our Actions, ſo the Will of God revealed in His Works ought to be the reſt of all our Paſſions. When it pleaſes God to take away our Relations we ought to be ſenſible, and to mourn for their loſs, yet at the ſame time we muſt by no means quarrel, murmur or contend, but ſubmit to Gods Prerogative. Sovereignty calls for ſubjection; *Rom.* 13. 1. *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers*: If every Soul ought to be ſubject to the Higher Powers on Earth, much more to the Higheſt Power in Heaven and Earth. When *Aaron* heard the ſad news of the death of his two Sons in a violent ſudden manner, it's ſaid, *He held his peace*, *Levit.* 10. 3. He was ſenſible of his loſs, but as to any impatience or murmuring againſt God, he held his peace; ſo

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when Old *Eli* heard the ſad tydings of the ruin of his whole Family, he was very ſenſible of the loſs, yet he patiently ſubmitted to it, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* Sovereignty made him ſubmit. *Job* is an excellent pattern both of affliction and patience; ſee what is ſaid of him, *Job* 1. 22. *In all this Job ſinned not, nor charged God with folly.* Satan had ſaid to God, that if he would touch all that *Job* had, he would curſe him to his face; but *Job* ſinned not as he ſaid he would, but on the contrary, *Job* bleſſed God; and in this Satan was proved and declared a lyar. In all this that was done againſt *Job*, he had no ill thoughts of God, nor of what He had done, neither did he ſpeak any thing that might reflect any diſhonour upon Gods Wiſdom, Goodneſs or Truth, nor carry the leaſt charge of any folly or injuſtice in God. In all theſe croſſes and loſſes he met with, he did not quarrel with God; As to 1. The kinds of affliction laid upon him; nor 2. As to the inſtruments God employed to afflict him; nor 3. As to the extent of his Affliction, which touched all that he had; nor 4. As to the Time, and Circumſtances of them; but he meekly and patiently ſubmits to the Soveraignty of *Jehovah* in all. And to bring our ſtubborn Hearts, and this patient ſubmiſſive temper together, I ſhall offer theſe Conſiderations following.

1. Conſider, Who it is that hath taken away. This argued King *David* into Patience; *Pſal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth*, (that is, by way of Impatience or Murmuring) *becauſe thou didſt it*; they that conſider the Lord did it, will not quarrel at what is done.

2. Conſider, Whatever God hath taken away from any, he firſt gave it. This argued holy *Job* into Patience, *Job* 1. 21. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* He firſt gave, and now he hath taken but what he gave, and bleſſed be his Name for continuing it ſo long. When God gives and continues, we ought to be thankful; and when he takes away, we ought to ſtoop and be patient.

3. Conſider, God hath a greater Right to what we have, than we our ſelves have: No man can claim that Title to what he hath that God can. What *Benhadad* the King of *Aſſyria* ſpake proudly and falſly to *Ahab* King of *Iſrael*, *Jehovah* may moſt juſtly and truly ſay to every man; 1 *King.* 20. 3. *Thy ſilver and thy gold is mine, thy wives alſo, and thy children, even the goodlieſt of them are mine.* Thus may God ſay to all in reference to all the Comforts of Life, and of Life it ſelf; thy Time, thy Relations, thy Eſtate, thy Life, yea and all thou haſt is mine. Men may ſay in reference to one another, this or that is mine; but in reference to God all are but Stewards, and he the Proprietor, and his Title is Paramount to all men: Hence he is called the Poſſeſſour of Heaven and Earth, as having the beſt and moſt abſolute and unqueſtionable Title to both.

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4. Consider, That there are none but in extremity of Justice have forfeited all they have; their Health, their Wealth, their Liberty, their Lives, and whatever may be called theirs: And therefore when God deals worst with us, he deals better than we deserve; and it's of the Lords Mercy that we are not utterly consumed, and blasted root and branch. And this may argue us into Patience, that God takes away but some of our Comforts, when we have forfeited, and he might justly take away all. *Job* 37. 23. its said, *in plenty of justice he will not afflict*; he will not exercise his Power to consume, or his Justice to deal in extremity with any that submit to him. Seeing then there is no breach so wide, but he might make it wider; nor no Night so dark, but he might make it darker; nor no Wound so deep, but he might make it deeper; nor no Cross or Loss so heavy, but he may in Justice make it heavier; let us patiently stoop to what he doth.

5. Consider, The time is coming, when you shall meet and enjoy your Relations again. They are at present but gone to bed, and fallen asleep, and ere long Christ will come in all the glory of Heaven and Earth; and all that ever have, or do, or shall live to the end of the World, shall be raised out of their graves, and then Christ will Crown the Fidelity of his Servants with the fruition of himself, and of one another; and this argued the *Thessalonians* into Patience, under the loss of their Relations taken away by Death, 1 *Thes.* 4. 17, 18. *We shall be ever with the Lord, wherefore comfort one another with these words.* There is a vast difference between the Saints here, and what they shall be then; here they are subject to losses in their Estates and Crosses in their Relations, blastings in their Credits, and manifold Diseases and Sicknesses in the Body, and Death it self, but when they are arrived to the Resurrection of the Just, they may say farewel all Diseases and tedious Courses of Physick, I shall be sick no more; farewel all Evil Suggestions from Corrupt Nature, or from Satan, or any of his Instruments, I shall be Tempted no more; farewel all Losses incident to my Estate, I shall be Poor no more; farewel all Reproaches and unjust Reports which wounded my Reputation, I shall be Defamed no more; farewel all Mourning and Lamenting the loss of Relations, we shall meet and part no more; and farewel all Sin and sinful Inclinations, which were the true cause of all my Sorrow, I shall no more cry out, of a body of Death, or of a hard Impenitent and Unbelieving Heart. Heaven is a place of such Purity, Peace, Plenty, and Pleasure, that it admits of no sin, nor dissension, nor want, nor pain, nor sorrow whatsoever, *Rev.* 21. 4. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.* The meaning is, there shall be a freedom from all Evil, whether Sinful or Penal; and

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a fruition of all good things, and both theſe crowned with Eternity; wherefore comfort one another with theſe words. See another place of Scripture to this purpoſe, *Phil.* 3. 20, 21. *For our converſation is in heaven, from whence vve look for a Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, vvho ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body.* We who while we live on Earth have a Heavenly Converſation, do look for, long for, and pray for, a Saviour to come to Judgment, who when he comes ſhall change our vile body: The Greek reads it, who ſhall change, or metamorphoſe (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν) our humbled bodies, or bodies of humiliation; Chriſt when he comes to Judgment will firſt raiſe our bodies, then change them, and it will be a glorious change. Theſe mortal Bodies ſhall be made immortal, the fleſhly Bodies ſhall be made ſpiritual, theſe earthly Bodies ſhall be made heavenly, theſe weak Bodies ſhall be made ſtrong, and theſe Bodies that in reſpect of the Matter whence they were taken and muſt return, and in reſpect of the Diſeaſes they are ſubject to are called vile, ſhall be made like unto the glorious Body of Chriſt; and if any ask how this can be? the anſwer is at hand, *according to the vvorking vvhereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* Here is an Almighty Agent ingaged to effect this, who is able to ſubdue all things; and therefore this and the conſideration of this may comfort us under the loſs of our Relations, though they part in Tears, they ſhall meet in Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory, and never part.

6. Behold and conſider Death, both in the apprehenſion of Nature and of Faith; or firſt as we have made it, and then as Chriſt hath made it.

(1) As we have made it, the conſideration of it is full of dread: It's a ſtate of Separation and Deſtruction, and we all ſhrink at it, and flee from it. It comes with a curſe and beſpeaks Gods Wrath, for the firſt Covenant breach; to ſee Death on its pale Horſe is dreadful, *Rev.* 6. 8. but to ſee Hell following after is very terrible; to look into the Grave, and ſee the Worm of Corruption, that's ſad, but to look lower, and to ſee the never dying Worm gnawing, that's intollerable. Thus conſidered, it made King *David* looking on himſelf as a dying Man, to beg reſpite to be ſpared a while longer, that he might get into a more ready poſture, or be better prepared for Death; *Pſal.* 39. 13. *O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength, before I go hence and be no more.*

(2.) As Chriſt hath made it, and ſo death is altered, and changed; yea, ſanctified and ſweetned, made uſeful and advantagious; not at all terrible, much leſs the King of Terrors, but is made the King of Comforts; the ſting is taken away, and of a Curſe it's made a Bleſſing. In this ſence St. *Paul* deſired to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, *Phil.* 1. 23. This made old *Simeon* to rejoyce in the very ſight of Death, *Luk.* 2. 29, 30. *Lord novv let-*

teſt thou thy Servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have ſeen thy Salvation. This, this is that makes perſons willing to dye; yea, to chuſe it and rejoyce in it, becauſe Chriſt hath freed them from the ſlaviſh fear of it, and it hath loſt its ſting in the ſide of Chriſt: Beſides it puts a bleſſed end to Sin, and Miſery, and opens an entrance into Glory; that they go hence not only Conquering but Triumphing over Death, though it be never ſo Cruel.

2. Conſider what Death is? *Plato* calls it ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἀπάλλαξις, a Separation of the Soul and Body, or the departure of the Soul from the Body. As Natural Life doth conſiſt in that Union or Bond between Soul and Body, ſo Natural Death is the Diſſolution of that Union or Bond. Hence Death is ſet forth in Scripture by a Departing, by a going Hence, by a Diſſolution, and by a Removing, and ſuch like Phraſes. Yet to ſpeak more ſtrictly, Death is nothing elſe but the privation of this Natural Life; and privations cannot be defined but by their Habits; I mean, ſuch poſitive qualities as they bereave us of. Thus Sickneſs muſt be defined by Health, which it bereaves us of; and Blindneſs by Sight, which it deſtroys; and Darkneſs by Light, which it excludes; and Death by Life, which it deprives us of. And hence all Philoſophy defines Death by the effects, calling it a privation of Natural Life.

3. Conſider what brought Death, It is Sin; Satan craftily Tempted, and man fooliſhly yielded, and God juſtly inflicted Death. By Sin man became not onely ſubject to ſickneſs, weakneſs and pain, but to Death; for the wages of Sin is Death. Sin is the meritorious cauſe of Death, and hath made all the Funerals that ever were or are in the World. When the Apoſtle *Rom.* 5.12. had ſaid, *death paſſed upon all*, he gave this Reaſon, *for that all have ſinned.* Man had never fallen into the Grave, if he had not fallen into Tranſgreſſion. If Man had not turned from God by ſin, he had never been turned either into the Grave, or into Hell; his Nature was not ſubject to Corruption, till Sin had corrupted his Nature. When Man was at firſt Created, God put ſuch a Lamp of Immortality into him, as ſhould have blazed to Eternity, had not Man put it out by Sin: For though his Body was compounded of ſuch contrary Elements, as in corrupt Nature do neceſſitate a change, yet they were ſo tempered in the firſt Man, that there would have been no Jarr; and beſides, he had a Tree of Life, which was a Sacrament of his Immortality, and was to be a preſervative from all corrupting Alterations. It is Sin then, and that only, that brought Death into the World; ſo that we may juſtly take up a Lamentation againſt Sin, as that which hath rent one Relation and Friend from another, and thrown ſo many Generations into the Duſt before us.

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4. Conſider the certainty of Death, it will come, it will moſt certainly come upon all, there is no remedy againſt it; *contra vim mortis, non eſt medicamen in hortis.* God hath granted great Priviledges to ſome Perſons and Families, but never to dye was never granted to any. The Pſalmiſt puts forth a peice of Catechiſm which no man living can anſwer, *Pſal.* 89. 48. *What man is he that liveth, and ſhall not ſee death? ſhall he deliver his Soul from the hand of the Grave? Selah.* His meaning is, none can avoid the ſight of Death, nor eſcape the Grave; and he ſpeaks of a man in his beſt ſtate, as the *Hebrew* word ſignifies, what ſtrong, what potent, what mighty Man, let him be who or what he will, if he be a living man, he muſt dye, or ſuffer ſomething equivalent to Death: And the Aſſertion is not left without that emphatical ſignal word, *Selah*; which ſignifies, mark well what is here ſaid, obſerve it, paſs not by it, till you have conſidered it well; that all that live muſt die, and when they dye are bound for the Grave. Our Anceſtors gave place to us, and we muſt give place to others; this is a Doctrine which all the World yields to: *Solomon* tells us, *Eccl.* 9. 5. *The living know that they ſhall dye.* If you ask a Woman with Child, whether ſhe be Conceived with a Son, or a Daughter; or whether the Child will be Witty, or Wealthy; Beautiful, or Deformed; ſhe will ſay ſhe cannot tell: But if you ask her whether the Child will be Mortal or not, ſhe will preſently ſay Yes, it's ſure to dye. The very Heathen could ſay to one that hoped to prolong his Life, *Hac conditione intraſti ut exires; as ſure as we had a time to be born we muſt have a time to dye.* Both Man by Sin hath deſerved it, and the Righteous God hath Infallibly appointed it; and no Natural Strength, nor Humane Policy, nor Worldly Greatneſs, nor Eminency of Place, no nor Spiritual Gifts and Graces, can exempt perſons from it.

5. Conſider, None knows how ſoon Death may come: God hath no where promiſed any term of Life whatſoever to any man; and though all cannot ſay with *Iſaac*, *Behold I am old*, yet all may joyn with him in the following words, *I know not the day of my Death*, *Gen.* 27. 2. And *Solomon* tells us, *Man knoweth not his time*, *Eccl.* 9. 12. He is as ignorant when he ſhall be taken away by Death, as the Fiſhes of being taken out of the Water, or the Birds of being caught by the Snare: The Glaſs is not more Brittle, as what is moſt conſtant in mans Life. And hence all thoſe Epithets of Dream, Shadow, Smoak, VVind, Vapor, and Ship on the Sea, are commonly given to this wretched Life. VVe are all Tenants at VVill, and know not when our great Landlord will turn us out.

There are three things very uncertain concerning Death: 1. The time when: 2. The place where: 3. The manner how. In this ſence Death is the moſt dark and obſcure thing in the VVorld. Among the many queſtions God put to *Job*, this is one, which neither he nor any man can anſwer.

Job 38. 17. *Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or haſt thou ſeen the doors of the ſhadow of death?* The queſtion is not whether *Job* thought he ſhould dye; for this he, and all men believe; but it is concerning the time when, the place where, and manner how he ſhould dye: The words are Metaphorical, and may be underſtood thus.

1. The Scripture compares the Natural Life of Man to a day.

2. The end of Natural Life is called night, which follows the day; *Joh.* 9. 4. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.* He calls all his Life a day, in which he was to work the works of a Mediator, and his Death he calls night, which admits of no operation.

3. The Grave to which Man goes in the evening of his Life is called a Houſe, a Houſe appointed for all living, *Job* 30. 23. As we go in the evening of the day to our Houſes, ſo in the evening of Life we go to the Grave.

4. As our Houſes have gates and doors by which we enter into them, ſo the Grave hath gates and doors by which we enter into it.

5. As there are Chambers in our Houſes, ſo there are in the Grave. *Solomon* calls the Harlots houſe, *the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death*, *Prov.* 7. 27. Thoſe Chambers of Pleaſure bring perſons to the Chambers of Death; the Grave or Houſe of Death is any place in general where the dead lye; but the Chambers of Death may be thoſe particular places, where every particular perſon lyes, and may elegantly be called a Chamber.

6. Theſe Gates, Doors and Chambers have their Locks and Keys belonging to them; *Rev.* 1. 18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.* With a Key we open our Gates and Doors, to let perſons into our Houſes; and with a Key we ſhut them in, and let them out again; ſo Chriſt unlocks the Gates and Doors of the Grave to let perſons in, and locks them up in the Grave, ſo that none can releaſe them, till He unlocks the Gates and Doors by His Powerful Voice, and calls them out at the Reſurrection: Chriſt by His Active and Paſſive Obedience hath obtained Power to open and ſhut Hell and the Grave, and He hath the Keys of both in His own Cuſtody.

7. The Scripture tells us that theſe Chambers of the Grave, have their beds for perſons to reſt and ſleep in; as when perſons have been hard at work all day, at night they go to their Chambers, put off their cloaths, and go to bed and ſleep; in alluſion to thoſe perſons that have been hard at work all the day of Life, when the night of Death comes, they go to bed in the Chambers of Death, and ſleep till the Reſurrection; *Iſa.* 57. 2. *He ſhall enter*

enter into peace, they ſhall reſt in their beds, each one walking in his uprightneſs. He ſpeaks of Righteons and Merciful Men who worſhip God aright, and walk before Him in uprightneſs; theſe dye, and at Death he tells us what comes of them, their Souls enter into Peace, that is, into Heaven a place of Peace, and their Bodies reſt in the Grave as in a bed: Death puts them to bed, the common bed that all the Saints ſleep in, a bed ſweetned and perfumed by Chriſt Himſelf; a bed in which they ſleep quietly till Dooms day. Thus by opening theſe Metaphorical expreſſions, Mans ignorance, as to the time, place, and manner of dying is ſufficiently ſet forth; now put the queſtion to any Man that God put to *Job*; have the Gates of Death been opened unto thee? He will preſently ſay, oh no, I know not when, nor where, nor how I ſhall be called from Time into Eternity: I know not whether I ſhall enter into the Grave through the Gates of a natural or violent, a ſudden or lingering, a timely or untimely Death; though I know God will bring me to Death, yet I do not know when, where, or how He will do it.

6. Conſider, That as Death will certainly come, and the time, place and manner is very uncertain; ſo when ever it comes it will certainly overcome. It was the Motto of a great Warriour, *veni, vidi, vici*, I came, I ſaw, I overcame. This may be truly ſaid of Death, it comes, and it overcomes. It's called a King, and the King of Terrors; and we may add it's the Terror of Kings. Sin ſet a Crown upon the head of this King, and its Empire extends to all Mankind; and it's ſo ſtrong that no ſtrength in Nature can ſtand before it. When *Solomon* would ſhew the ſtrength of Love, he ſets it forth by Death; Love ſaith he is ſtrong as Death, Jealouſie is cruel as the Grave; ſtrong as Death which overcomes all, cruel as the Grave which ſpares none. We read of mighty Gyants in the Old World, and of *Sampſon*, who was ſtrong enough to ſlay a Thouſand Men with the Jaw bone of an Aſs; and we read of *Goliah, who defied the armies of Iſrael, and ſaid, give me a man, that we may fight together*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 10. Yea, we read of mighty Warriors, who have conquered whole Nations, yet have been all conquered by Death, and none could ever boaſt of a Victory over it, Chriſt only excepted. It's ſo ſtrong that nothing can overcome it, and ſo impartial that nothing can bribe or corrupt it, and ſo inexorable that no Prayers nor Tears, nor any Arguments can prevail to ſtay its hand, or give a diſpenſation. Death is deaf to all excuſes, to all arguments, to all crying and tears whatſoever, and when it comes we muſt go with it.

Laſtly, Conſider the effects of Death, when it comes it doth two things. (1.) It makes a ſeparation between Soul and Body, hence called a diſſolution; it not only ſeparates between the neareſt and deareſt Relations, but it diſſolves the Natural Union between Soul and Body, and rends thoſe lov-

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ing Companions asunder, it breaks all Bonds except that of the Covenant between God and Believers.

(2.) It sends the Soul and Body thus separated to their proper place; *Eccl.* 12. 7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it.* Man is a compound of Mortal and Immortal, a Body and a Soul; Death sends the Body to the Grave, which is called the House appointed for all the living; the Grave is a dark and consumptive place, where the Body is gradually turned into Dust and Earth, as it was, and the Divine part, or Soul, or Spirit returns to God who gave it, to receive an Impartial Sentence how it shall go with it for ever; the state of the Soul is then to be determined for Heaven or Hell, Salvation or Damnation. St. *Augustine* calls Death *Ostium Æternitatis*, the door that opens to Men an Eternity of Life or Death, and then they hear from Christ, either *come ye blessed*, or *depart ye cursed.* This is an amazing consideration that Death sends the Soul immediately to God, as a Righteous and Impartial Judge, to pass Sentence upon it, and to determine its state for Life and Death to all Eternity. *Heb.* 9. 27. *As it is appointed unto men once to dye, so after that the judgment.* He means a particular Judgment, *statim a morte cujusq;*, so as Death leaves persons, the great and general Judgment will find them; both these Judgments are successively before the dying Man; and here we may consider the general and last day of Judgment at the end of the World, when Christ shall come Visibly and Gloriously to Judge the World. And here we may consider,

1. The Summons given by the voice of a Trumpet, called the Trump of God, and the last Trumpet, which shall sound so loud, as not only to startle and awaken the Dead, but make them rise out of their Graves, and both Earth and Sea shall give up their Prisoners.

2. The Appearance, which must be Quick and Dead, small and great, all the World, all persons in general, and all their Actions, good or bad.

3. The separation to be made between the precious and the vile: Sheep and Goats must no longer feed and fold together, the Sheep must be placed on the Right-hand, and the Goats on the Left.

4. The Tryal, which must be both of Persons and Actions, made by such infallible Rules, and such authentick Witnesses, as none shall be able to fault or contradict it.

5. After Tryal comes the Sentence, of Absolution or Condemnation according to Mens works, good or evil; to the Sheep the Sentence is, *come ye blessed*, to the Goats, *go ye cursed.*

6. After the Sentence follows the Execution, the Goats shall go into Everlasting Punishment, but the Sheep into Life Eternal. There will be but two sorts of persons at Judgment, Believers and Infidels, one sort go to Heaven, the

the other to Hell : These are the everlasting receptacles of all persons, Souls and Bodies for ever after Judgment. Righteous Men go to Heaven a place of Joy and Bliss, where they enjoy the Beatifical Vision of God, and the amazing Glory, the quiet Rest and perfect Satisfaction of Eternity; where they are freed from all evil, and have a fruition of all good, and both crowned with Eternity. All Infidels go to Hell, a place of Fire, a Lake of Brimstone, the very center of misery, where they are bound hand and foot, beaten with many stripes, tormented with flames of Fire, gnawed and corroded by the never dying Worm, where both the Tormentors, the torments, and the tormented are immortal. The consideration of Death in this Latitude, (though it be no pleasant subject, and generally too much neglected, and difficult to perform) is that which both King *David* and *Moses* did Petition Heaven for help to perform; *Psal.* 39. 4 and *Psal* 90. 12. and a greater than both did most pathetically wish his own people to do, even when they lived in the sight of Death, yet considered it not, *Deut.* 32. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.* Wisdom consists in three things : 1. Sight. 2. Choice. 3. Action. It sees good and evil; it chuses the one and refuses the other, and acts its choice by consideration and practice. To consider Death thus, doth not only argue a wise man, but is a powerful means to stir up persons to prepare for it, and this brings us to the last thing.

7. And Lastly, Behold, and make actual preparation for Death. We count it good Husbandry in Temporal Concernes, in Summer to provide for Winter, in a Calm to provide for a Storm, and in Youth to provide for Old Age; and we use to say Sickness and Death are spending times; let us lay in provision for such a time. *Solomon* gives pertinent Advice to this purpose, *Eccl.* 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.* God hath given to every person some work to do, and in the winding up of Time he will call them to account whether it be done or not. Every one ought to find out his own proper work, and then to do it; it's not sufficient to know our work and to consider it, and barely to desire, to hope and to resolve to do it, except it be actually done. To find out the work God hath put into our hands is one thing, and to do it is another; and therefore saith *Solomon*, whatsoever thy hand finds to do for God, for thy self, or for others, do it with thy might; that is, do it with thy whole man, and do it speedily, fully, and constantly; and he gives a very good reason why, because as all persons are Travelling to the Grave, so when they are once arrived thither, there is a total exclusion of all operation, either of the Head, or of the Heart, or of the Hand. Death is call'd a going the way of all Flesh, and the way of all the Earth, a going hence and being seen no more, and a going

going the way whence we ſhall not return, no returning thence to believe or repent, to amend what is amiſs, and to finiſh what is imperfect. Every good Chriſtian ſhould be able in ſome meaſure to ſay as Chriſt ſaid when he was about to leave the World, *Joh.* 17. 4. *I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finiſhed the vvork vvhich thou gaveſt me to do.* He did not onely begin the work given him, but finiſhed it, and ſo ſhould all good Chriſtians.

Death is a very ſolitary and difficult work, and its hard not to miſcarry in it; then Satan ſhoots his hotteſt Darts to batter down the Faith and Hopes of good-men, and to ſhake the very Foundation upon which they build: Then alſo Conſcience is moſt quick-ſighted to ſpy Faults, and moſt tender to lay little Sins to Heart, and moſt ſharp in its Reflex acts, and moſt ſevere in its Accuſations and Cenſures. Death is called an Enemy, and the laſt Enemy, and as ſuch it proclaims war againſt all Mankind; and upon occaſion, it invades the Bodies of men with an Army of mortal Diſeaſes, ſudden Accidents and deadly Harbingers; it alſo as an enemy Encounters, and ſhoots ſuch mortal Darts, that poor weak man cannot ſtand before it, but flies to ſome refuge or other; to Friends, to Phyſitians, to Prayers and Promiſes, or to whatſoever he hopes may help and ſhelter him againſt it, but this Enemy purſues him, takes him priſoner, and at laſt deſtroyes whatever is deſtroyable in man, till at laſt death it ſelf ſhall be deſtroyed; 1 *Cor.* 15. 26. Let us prepare to meet this Enemy, by putting on the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to ſtand againſt the Aſſaults of Satan, and of an awakened Conſcience; the more we prepare for it before it come, the leſs hurt it will do us when it comes.

If any ask wherein this preparation conſiſts? I anſwer it conſiſts in two things; 1. In parting with that which makes Death Terrible. 2. In getting what will make it Comfortable.

1. Part with that which makes Death terrible; and that is Sin, the great troubler on a Death-bed Sin is not only of an infernal Original, and the Cauſe of Death, but the ſting of it; 1 *Cor.* 15. 56. *The ſting of death is ſin.* The meaning is, that all the frights and fears, all the horror and terror, all the pain and ſorrow, all the guilt and deſpair there is in Death, it receives it all from Sin; Sin ſtings every member of the Body with pain, and every faculty of the Soul with guilt, it ſometimes flies in mens Faces while they live, but in a ſpecial manner when they come to dye. Sin is an evil in it ſelf, and an evil forbidden, and the cauſe of all evils both in Life and Death and after Death, our firſt and great care muſt be to ceaſe, to depart, to abſtain, and to flee from Sin; and to this end,

(1.) Call Sin to mind, commune with your own hearts, think on, and conſider your own ways, till you have got a ſight of your own ſins; at Death mens ſins ſhall be ſet in order before them, let men call their own ſins before them

no End.